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Hawk Reagan Lurks Backstage as Conciliatory Reagan Debuts

The new, conciliatory President Reagan, who is willing to deal with what he once called "the Evil Empire," will make his debut Monday in the East Room.

For his upcoming speech that day, he has sworn off the anti-Soviet rhetoric of a lifetime, we are told, in the interests of world peace.

Unfortunately, the new Reagan will collide with the old Reagan, the one who helped inspire a new report that will prove that his charges that the Soviets lie, cheat and break treaties are true. An administration document—now classified, although a public version is expected—about Soviet violations of accords, an enterprise he encouraged by frequent references to his suspicions, will have been delivered to Congress by the time he speaks.

White House officials are unhappy about the awkward coincidence.

They worry that Europe, which is increasingly nervous about the collapse of the arms talks, will think that the veteran hawk is trying to flim-flam them again. His strategists agree that it may not be easy to explain in Bonn and London why Reagan will appear to have an olive branch in one hand and an indictment in the other.

The president's men point out that there was nothing they could do to stop the violations report, which was mandated by a 93-to-0 Senate vote on an amendment that came from conservatives who said they thought Reagan was right the first time about the Soviets. Its sponsors were Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Steve Symms (R-Idaho) and James A. McClure (R-Idaho). They have accused the administration of dragging its feet.

A Consolidated Verification Group made up of representatives from the National Security Council, the CIA, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the State and Defense departments has been meeting since summer. And the right-wingers insist

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that the "drafts have been ready for months."

Last week, Symms, for himself, Helms and McClure, wrote Reagan to complain of the delay. He closed on a warning note: "This group has the potential voting power to block Senate advice and consent of any new arms control."

When this group heard that the veteran hawk in the White House was about to do a dove number, they reportedly suspected a further effort to block the report. Now that they know it is coming out this week, they consider the speech an attempt to make it seem "inappropriate."

In the conciliation speech, Reagan will "touch on" the untimely violations report, but "not go into details" for obvious reasons.

His new tone toward the Soviets has been dictated by domestic and foreign imperatives. He is expected to be a declared candidate by the end of the month. And the Republican Party chairman, Sen. Paul

Laxalt (R-Nev.), said, as he came out of the White House recently, that it is "not healthy" for Americans to see Reagan as presiding over "another Cold War."

Americans, who would like a nuclear freeze, have been patient with Reagan, but his managers apparently believe behavior modification is called for in a campaign year.

Europeans are less tolerant. Their leaders have been telling ours that Reagan owes them one for accepting the cruise missiles. They suggest that their people are not reassured by his airy reassurances that the Soviets will come back to the bargaining table. The Soviets have no particular reason for vindicating him as a prophet—after all, he once predicted that they would "end up on the trash heap of history."

The administration is making a major effort to persuade the allies that Reagan is a changed man. The speech will be sent abroad by satellite. But administration officials know that the virtually simultaneous delivery of details of seven treaty violations can make the new "peace initiative" seem a bit hollow.

The report is said to show that the Soviets violated the SALT I provisions for "encrypted telemetry," which means that they encode an unacceptable number of the signals indicting the strength and characteristics of missiles being tested. This makes verification, one of the thorniest questions in arms control, practically impossible.

It also is expected to say that the Soviets are violating SALT II provisions by their new ICBM, the SSX24, which they claim is merely an upgraded and modernized version of an old model, and by the construction of a giant radar screen.

The issuance of the violations report, which conservatives said that they think merely shows "the tip of the iceberg," just as Reagan is reaching out to the violators for the first time, is bad. But White House managers decided that, on the whole, it would have been worse for Reagan to be accused of "cover-up" by the right wing of his party.

"We hope people will understand," said a White House staff member, "that he means it when he says, 'even so.'"